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THURSDAY, FEB. 25, 1915.

Mayor Wilson's Pledges Measured Against His Tax Rate and His Performances With Warrenite

IT IS DIFFICULT to read Mayor Wilson's statements made just before he entered the office of mayor, and just after his first inauguration, without obtaining the view that he was then filled with a spirit of reform and that he sincerely desired to furnish a good administration and to give the best government for the lowest cost.

But a comparison of the mayor's words with his acts proves that after he took up the responsibilities of government, he became the mere instrument of predatory politics, so that soon all his good resolutions were cast to the winds and all his promises became as chaff.

That this conclusion may stand upon proof and not upon mere assertion, let act be measured against promise, and promise against act, in a few of the typical cases which may be urged.

In his message of Dec. 4, 1914, the mayor gave these pledges:

I believe the public works department should be under absolute control of the city engineer and that he should be solely responsible for the proper conduct of the office of Director of Public Works, as well as the office of city engineer.

I am opposed absolutely to the creation of office for political purposes, and such offices as now exist, which can be readily, and without destroying efficiency, should be consolidated, by ordinance or charter amendments as soon as possible. In this way much saving can be accomplished for the tax payers.

I believe all work, except such as is extremely urgent, should be advertised for, as required by ordinance, and awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, and that the waiver of the mayor should not be requested except in great emergencies.

In his message of June 3, 1915, he said:

I believe this city can and should be properly maintained on a uniform 15 mill tax rate.

I am a firm believer in the merit system as to our city employees.

He believed in 1912 that public work should be let to bid, and that the mayor's waiver should not be sought except in GREAT EMERGENCIES.

But before the end of 1913 he had managed a contract with the Warrenite people for a great sum of money. There was no "urgency" and no "great emergency."

Encouraged by the success of this violation of his pledge, he attempted, in 1914, to give an additional \$160,000 of public money to the owners of Warrenite and gave his necessary waiver in writing.

There was no urgency and no "great emergency." The transaction was illegal, and though the mayor was advised as to the illegality by his city attorney, he proceeded, and the contract is now suspended by an order of the superior court.

In this matter the city engineer, was not only not the head of the Public Works department, but his views were subordinated, and Director Courtade was made the instrument through which the mayor carried out his purpose to buy Warrenite.

In 1912 the mayor was opposed to the unnecessary creation of public places, but by 1913 he had engaged in the wholesale creation of such places, and swelled the police force by an unprecedented number of men, in face of large public opposition.

Not only this, but he has entirely neglected to carry out, or attempt to carry out, the consolidation of offices, by which as he had said, "much money could be saved to the taxpayers."

The experts, employed for \$20,000 to investigate the city's plan of doing business, recommended a number of such consolidations.

In 1912 the mayor was a firm believer in the merit system for city employees, but has not in any degree kept his promise to put it into effect, though the law might have been put to vote, upon a ten per cent petition of the citizens, which the mayor might have obtained at any time.

Moreover he has participated in the violent destruction of the merit system in Connecticut, attempted by the Horaback machine in the General Assembly?

His pledges with respect to the tax rate have been numerous and unkept.

In 1912, while his pledges were fresh in mind, he did arrange a tax rate of 15.2 mills. But in 1913 the rate was 17.4; in 1914 was 19.2 and in 1915, 18 mills.

Instead of an efficient government economically administered Bridgeport has received a n administration which costs \$560,000 more per annum than it did just before Mayor Wilson took office. The municipal debt has been, or will soon be increased by almost \$3,000,000.

And the worst is yet to come. The full effect of debt upon the tax rate has not been realized. The state tax has been delayed. The school tax has been cut. The city's working balance has been reduced. These are not savings but concealments. They postpone the day of reckoning, but do not settle the bill.

From these acts, measured by the mayor's pledges, it must be concluded that he has been liberal in words but stingy in performance. He has been enthusiastic in spending money, not in saving it. His enthusiasm for spending reaches high tide in the Warrenite contracts, which will receive the attention of the voters in the next campaign.

THE MILITARY SPIRIT

COL. ROOSEVELT is warm for military interference in Mexico. Which creates the impression that perhaps the country is fortunate in not having him for president now. These are times when soft answers are more serviceable than big sticks.

A GENERAL WITH IMAGINATION

MAJOR GENERAL Francis V. Greene, U. S. A., retired, has a vivid imagination, but not much of a gift for comparing conditions.

Consider what has happened. Out of a state of profound peace, Belgium was practically destroyed in just thirty-one days. How did that happen? Simply because Belgium was not sufficiently prepared. And if you say that this could not happen to us because of our immense resources, and because of the ocean which separates us from the nations of Europe, I reply there is no easier mark than a rich nation unprepared for defense.

Belgium is a buffer state in the matter of armed nations. Her entire population was not as great as the number of armed men engaged in the war. That she had some defense was the cause of her partial destruction. If she had none there is a strong probability she would now be in no worse condition than Luxemburg. England, separated from the seat of war by

a silver strip of water, has not been "practically destroyed." The difference in our own military resources and England's, is more than compensated by 3,000 miles of ocean.

The United States ought to have a large navy, and adequate defense for the city of New York. But it will not help much to measure New York's danger by a comparison with Belgium.

ANNIVERSARY OF LAST INVASION OF ENGLAND.

It was just 113 years ago today, on Feb. 25, 1797, that the last invasion of an enemy on the shores of England came to an ignominious end with the surrender of the French army which had landed near Fishguard. Now that Great Britain is again threatened by raiding Germans the story of that exploit of more than a century ago assumes new interest.

On the twenty-second of February in 1797 three ships and a lugger, sailing under English colors, were sighted off Pembrokehire. A sailor recognized them as French vessels, although they flew the British colors, and at once sounded the alarm. Arrived off Fishguard, the fleet struck the English flag, and sent aloft a French ensign. There was wild excitement, and messengers were dispatched in all directions to arouse the people to the threatened danger.

The inhabitants along the coast, learning their position, lined all the roads, and set out for the interior. There they told wild stories of the approach of a fleet of vast proportions, with a tremendous army on board. The men who remained behind, however, prepared to resist the invasion. The lead of a cathedral roof was cast into bullets, and those who remained behind, prepared to resist the invasion. The lead of a cathedral roof was cast into bullets, and those who remained behind, prepared to resist the invasion.

On the twenty-fourth several English vessels sailed out to attack the French fleet, and the latter sailed away, leaving the invading army to its fate.

By the evening of the twenty-fourth a little army of soldiers and militia, under the command of Lord Cawdor, reached the scene and formed in battle array. The invaders, many women, wearing red clothing to give at a distance the appearance of uniforms, joined the little army, and the French commander, Taitel, was so impressed that he offered to surrender, provided that he and his men should be placed on ships and sent back to France.

Lord Cawdor replied that immediate and unconditional surrender was the only terms he had to offer, and that unless the enemy capitulated by two o'clock of the twenty-fifth he would march against the 10,000 men and drive the invaders into the sea. The 10,000 men existed only in the English commander's imagination, but he had so displayed his might that he gave the appearance of a large army.

Gen. Tate was not disposed to doubt the word of the British leader, and on the morning of the twenty-fifth the invasion was signed, and the French troops laid down their arms. The invaders were marched to various prisons, where they were confined for some time. Nearly 200 of them were confined in a jail in Pembroke contrived to escape by digging a subterranean tunnel 180 feet long and several feet beneath the surface.

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Won't Disturb Stratford Ave. Bridge Now

"If possible we will build a new Stratford avenue bridge and leave the present structure open to all kinds of traffic until the new bridge is completed," said J. E. Griesner of Baltimore one of the engineers who has been employed by the Stratford avenue bridge commission to build the new span over the Pequonnoque river. Mr. Griesner and his partner, Howard Whitman, were inspecting the approaches to the bridge yesterday preliminary to drawing sketches of what they think will be the proper structure.

The engineers expect that their work of inspection and sketching will take several days and it will at least a week before they have a tangible plan prepared. Engineer Griesner favors retaining the present Stratford avenue structure in place until a new bridge is built because of the excessive cost of a temporary structure and the inconvenience which will be suffered by vehicular traffic now using the bridge.

William I. Allen, Walter E. Lashar and Secretary Blackham of the bridge commission with Mayor Wilson met the engineers in the city hall Tuesday night. The "Y" plan of approach in a straight line west from Stratford avenue, and from Nichols streets, was shown the engineers and they thought it might be worked out although they will recommend nothing until they have gone over the ground.

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